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ABSTRACT

A project at Fort Lewis College (Durango, Colorado) was designed to reconceptualize elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs by infusing special education content so graduates would be prepared to provide instruction for individual differences mandated by mainstreaming legislation. In Phase I, curriculum was developed based on validation of competency statements in ten areas. Faculty were then assigned (in Phase II) the development of competencies to be infused into their courses. Modifications in the program included replacement of a special education survey course with a course on teaching methods and a practicum. Phase III featured field testing and further revision. Faculty development, concurrent with the curriculum development, included travel funds for participation in professional conferences and preparation of project materials related to special education concepts. (CL)

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Teacher Preparation for Mainstreaming:

Small College Case Study

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Teacher Preparation for Mainstreaming:

Small College Case Study

Located at the confluence of many cultures in tne Four Corners Area of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona, Fort Lewis College is a coeducational state-supported undergraduate institution offering a broad spectrum of liberal arts based programs in three schools: Arts & Sciences, Business, and Education. Enrollment is at 3,000; faculty members are 159 college-wide.

The School of Education consists of three academic departments: Teacher Education, Physical Education, and Psychology. Both elementary and secondary programs are offered in regular teacher certification; the elementary program constitutes a major degree, while the secondary professional sequence of courses supplements an approved major endorsed by the State of Colorado. Prior to the Dean's Grant Project, both levels included a state-required special education survey course, "Teaching the Handicapped in the Regular Classroom." However, an analysis of the Colorado Department of Education First and Third Year Follow up Study of Program Graduates considered with other data, including on campus graduates' evaluation of the program and evaluations of student teachers by college consultants and supervising teachers, indicated the need for an infusion approach additional to the three-credit hour course required by the state.

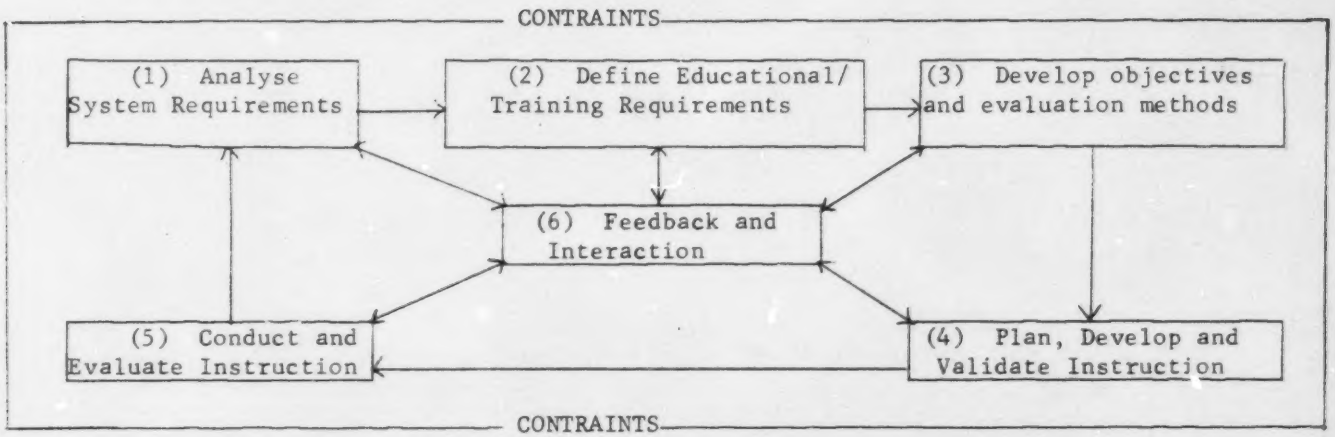
This project utilized the Air Force (1976) Instructional System Development Model (see Figure I) as a framework for planning the three-year study period.

[Insert Figure I about here]

The general purpose of the Dean's Grant Project was to reconceptualize

Figure I

Model for Instructional Development


CONTRAINTS
(1) Analyse System Requirements
(2) Define Educational/ Training Requirements
(3) Develop objectives and evaluation methods
(6) Feedback and Interaction
(5) Conduct and Evaluate Instruction
(4) Plan, Develop and Validate Instruction
CONTRAINTS

the elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs by infusing special education content throughout both sequences so that our graduates could meet the challenge of meeting individual differences as a result of the "mainstreaming" law -- P. L. 94-142. An overview of the project may be seen in Figure II.

[Insert Figure II about here]

Although curriculum revision and faculty development interfaced throughout the project, curriculum development will be discussed first and faculty development will be discussed as a separate goal later.

Phase I -- determine which content areas to infuse, where they fit, and who will develop them -- focused on step one of the instructional model: analyzing system requirements. Faculty from the three schools as well as representatives from the Intercultural Center, the Learning Assistance Center, and community agencies and public schools were included at various points of the systematic review of the existing program. This review was relative to the Master List of Competencies compiled by the Coordinator. Various lists of competencies provided by other Dean's Projects were organized under the Ten Clusters of Capabilities (National Support Systems Project, 1980).

The initial effort was a validation of the selected competency statements through a Survey of Public Schools; administrators, regular and special education teachers on both levels rated the competencies in terms of importance for regular classroom teachers' competence in dealing with mainstreaming. Results of that survey were presented at the National Support Systems Project Meeting in Washington, D. C. (1981). Figures III, IV, and V reveal the Top Ten Areas of Competence desired for regular classroom teachers by three groups: principals, elementary, and secondary teachers.

[Insert figures III, IV, and V about here]

Figure II

Fort Lewis College Dean's Grant Project

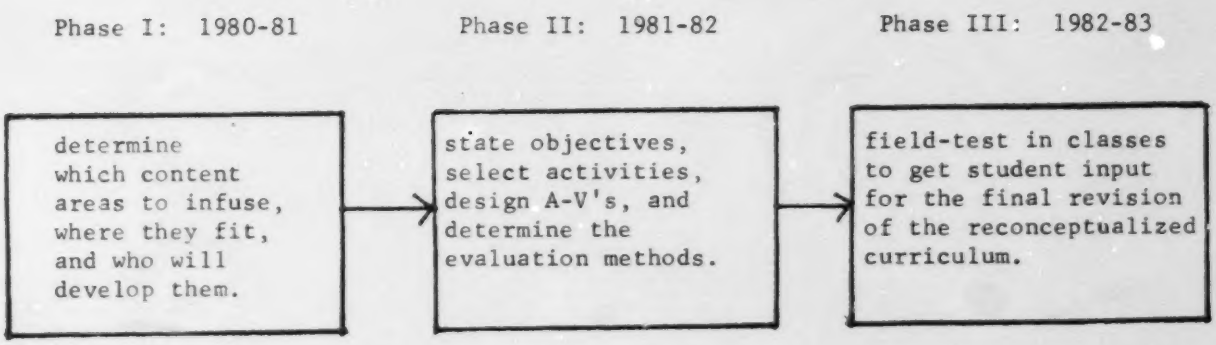

Phase I: 1980-81
Phase II: 1981-82
Phase III: 1982-83
determine which content areas to infuse, where they fit, and who will develop them.
state objectives, select activities, design A-V's, and determine the evaluation methods.
field-test in classes to get student input for the final revision of the reconceptualized curriculum.

Figure III: Top Ten Rated Content Areas by ADMINISTRATORS

	Elementary	Secondary	Administrators
1.	Learner characteristics	Develop / implement I.E.P.	P.L. 94-142, Section 504
2.	Develop/implement I.E.P.	Program planning	Program planning
3.	Individual programs	Learner characteristics	Staffing
4.	Instructional procedures	Learning Theory	Architectural barriers
5.	Learning theory	Field experience	Services in building
6.	Programming	Curricular aims	Personal/professional
7.	Referral	Instructional procedures	Handicapping conditions
8.	Classroom climate	Organizing for instruction	Attitude/effects
9.	Curriculum aims	Behavioral objectives	Learner characteristics
10.	Attitude/effects	Attitude/effects	Related services

Figure IV: Top Ten Rated Content Areas by ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

	Elementary	Secondary	Administrators
1.	Personal/professional	Learner characteristics	Staffing
2.	Referral	Personal/professional	School/community
3.	School/community resources	Attitudes/effects on others	Services within building
4.	Curricular aims	Instructional Procedures	Architectural barriers
5.	Learning theory	Curricular aims	Public/private agencies
6.	Mainstreaming/normalization	Mainstreaming/normalization	Curricular aims
7.	Learner characteristics	Organizing for instruction	Behavioral objectives
8.	Services in building	Classroom climate	Learner characteristics
9.	Instructional procedures	Assessment/evaluation	Personal/professional
10.	Implement individual programs	Learning theory	P.L. 94-142, Section 504

Figure V: Top Ten Rated Content Areas by SECONDARY TEACHERS

	Elementary	Secondary	Administrators
1.	Learner characteristics	Learning characteristics	P.L. 94-142, Section 504
2.	Individual programs	School/community resources	School/community
3.	Attitudes/effects on others	Personal/professional	Personal/professional
4.	Personal/professional	Individual programs	Referral
5.	Referral	Referral	Staffing
6.	Organizing for instruction	Instructional procedures	Services in building
7.	Learning theory	Learning theory	Learner characteristics
8.	Instructional procedures	Mainstreaming/normalization	Mainstreaming/normal.
9.	Behavior management	Organizing for instruction	Architectural barriers
10.	Assessment/evaluation	Adapting curriculum	Related services

This data provided the working list of "critical competencies" utilized by the task force assigned to reconceptualize both elementary and secondary programs. It is important to note that this group approached the task from a zero-based philosophy: conceptualizing the ideal program rather than attempting to revise the existing program through patch-work effort. Using planning sheets provided by the coordinator, the task force deliberated where competencies should be infused; they determined a level of importance for each course since the competencies would be introduced several times in many cases; and they indicated what level of achievement was desirable for students in each course (awareness, proficience, and mastery). This work was completed by the end of Phase I, when faculty were assigned the development of competencies to be infused into their courses.

Phase II -- state objectives, select activities, design A-V's, and determine evaluation methods -- incorporated steps 2-4 of the Instructional Systems Model. Those competency statements identified and placed in Phase II were developed by each instructor for the courses they were presently teaching. It is interesting to note that the required 3-hour special education survey course was judged ineffective as offered, and three new courses were introduced in its place: Survey of Exceptionalities (2 hr), Methods of Teaching Exceptionalities (2 hr), and Practicum with Exceptionality (1 hr). By separating theory from practice, it was felt that students would gain a greater understanding of specific strategies; one three-hour course simply was inadequate for the requirements imposed on instructor and students.

The practicum with exceptionality was included to give students first-hand experience with an exceptional individual in order to sensitize preservice students to the individual nature of exceptionalities. Placements are made in a broad range of activities: assisting with College for Living

classes for developmentally disabled adults; working as an aide in resource rooms in the schools; tutoring exceptional college students, such as wheelchair or blind students; or serving as Big Brother/Big Sister with clients in the La Plata County Youth Home. The seminar held every two weeks on campus offers a forum for exchange of the varied experiences, as well as an opportunity to offer at the teachable moment instruction related to counseling skills, tutoring strategies, and application of specified strategies for teaching handicapped.

At the conclusion of Phase Two, all lesson plans developed by faculty for their assigned competencies were incorporated into a two-volume curriculum guide. It is hoped that this effort will facilitate institutionalization when faculty rotate courses and new faculty assume courses developed by others. A briefer version of that effort is the Curriculum Infusion Overview which demonstrates the infusion process for each competency statement throughout all required courses of both elementary and secondary programs.

Phase III -- field-test in classes to get student input for final revision effort concluded the Instructional Systems Model (step 5: Conduct and evaluate instruction) with informal and formal evaluation. In the fall semester, instructors were asked simply to try out their new plans and to revise them for the evaluation by students in the winter semester, when each class would be asked to participate in the field testing. This approach was used to encourage further revision based on informal evaluation techniques. During the winter session, each class participated in student surveys of "perceived knowledge and skills" relative to the infused competencies. This data will become part of the final report and will offer important information as the department reviews the status of the infused curriculum and considers plans for ongoing evaluation and revision.

A final component of this phase is the Teacher Conference planned for April 13, 1983. Representatives from each of the districts who receive our student teachers will participate in a full-day conference focusing on mainstreaming. Additional to presenting results of the Dean's Grant Project, we hope to insure the effectiveness of the reconceptualized curriculum by engaging the full support of supervising teachers who guide our graduates in the implementation of individualized teaching techniques. Many of these same teachers have been included at various times in faculty development activities throughout the three-year study period.

Faculty Development. Interfaced with the curriculum development component of the project during the three-year study period was emphasis on faculty development, a concern of step 6 in the Instructional Systems Model: feedback and interaction. This project incorporated suggested activities from previous Dean's Projects: large and small group activities as well as individual interviews by the Coordinator. During the first year, a bibliography of Fort Lewis College library holdings relative to P. L. 94-142 and Mainstreaming compiled by the librarian was distributed to all project participants: the teacher education faculty (8) instructors from other departments across campus who teach our secondary content methods courses (20), and psychology department representatives (4) who teach general, educational and developmental psychology for the teacher education program. Consultants were engaged for large group sessions as well as target groups identified by ongoing needs assessments initiated by the Coordinator.

As project materials arrived, they were catalogued for the Project Office and announced in the monthly project newsletter, Freedom to Learn. This publication included articles on P. L. 94-142, and each issue focused on one exceptionality: identifying characteristics, prevalence, learning charac-

teristics, implications for teaching, and theoretical approaches underlying strategies of instruction. The newsletter also served as a forum for reporting learnings from professional conferences, as well as a publishing outlet for individual faculty research projects related to the grant.

Travel funds supported attendance at professional conferences during the first year, and upon their return, faculty were required to report on sessions related to special education in the newsletter. During the second and third years, travel funds were awarded to those faculty who were making presentations on topics related to special education or grant activities. In this way, the incentive of travel funds was used to encourage independent faculty development activity.

Project staff prepared faculty development products and disseminated them during the second year of the project. Each participant received a Resource Guide to Agencies and Services for Handicapped on the national, state, and local levels, An Annotated Bibliography of Project Materials, and a separate Reference Notebook of Materials keyed to the infused competencies for each of their courses. These materials were gathered from project materials, professional journals, public school teachers, and other Dean's Grant Project modules. Each notebook also contained handouts on Public Law 94-142 and each exceptionality from the Survey of Exceptionalities instructor. Finally, as a result of individual interviews, the coordinator prepared special materials for faculty as requested.

All efforts in faculty development had a singular goal: to get faculty (by whatever means) to embrace the institutionalization of special education concepts as an integral part of all aspects of the teacher preparation program. Appealing to their individual interests as professional educators, by suggesting research projects in special education issues consonant with those

interests, and familiarizing them with the need to prepare our graduates (as well as ourselves) to deal with handicapped students has by far been the most challenging aspect of the coordinator's role. A few illustrative examples are 1)the reading specialist who has now made several presentations on the overlap between reading disabled and learning disabled; 2) the former Olympic ski coach who is presently designing a module for blind skiiers after attending such a workshop with one of our blind students; 3) the history professor who delights in sharing information gained from project activities with his less-enlightened colleagues. Individuals must see the need for change before they are willing to take the necessary steps to bring change about. The most valuable resource effecting the reconceptualization of teacher preparation at Fort Lewis College is, without a doubt, the people element: faculty.